Scrutinising intertextuality in humour: moving beyond cultural literacy and towards critical literacy

Villy Tsakona
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece
villytsa@otenet.gr; vtsakona@ecd.uoa.gr

Abstract

Humourists often resort to previous texts to create their jokes, thus establishing intertextual links between them. Consequently, the processing of such jokes presupposes specific cultural literacy skills which enable speakers to recognise the allusions and interpret them in the new humorous contexts. It has, however, been suggested that speakers' emphasis on cultural literacy skills for processing allusions and humour may discourage or even impede them from adopting a critical perspective on humorous texts and the allusions included therein. The present study explores this interplay among intertextuality, cultural literacy, critical literacy, and humour in order to underscore the need for critical approaches to humorous texts and intertextuality. It critically analyses political jokes to demonstrate how the intertextual references contributing to their humorous effect create three sets of opposing groups: (a) those who create/tell the jokes vs. those who are targeted by them; (b) the 'culturally literate' who employ and understand the intertextual references vs. the 'culturally illiterate' who cannot and/or do not do that; and (c) those who agree vs. those who disagree with the ideological presuppositions of the humorous allusions and texts at hand. Based on incongruity and superiority theories of humour, the proposed analysis intends to argue, and pave the way, for more critical perspectives on humorous genres, whether outside or inside educational settings. Such perspectives could sensitise speakers to the fact that humour and intertextuality divide them into opposing groups such as the above-mentioned ones.

Keywords: intertextuality, critical literacy, cultural literacy, sociopragmatic functions, political jokes.

1. Introduction

Even in their most creative and unexpected forms, texts rely on previous texts both structurally and content-wise. So, in order to process any kind of discourse, speakers need to be familiar with and evoke certain texts/genres that seem to be relevant and necessary so as to produce or interpret what they may wish to write/say or understand respectively. Such relationships between texts have been accounted for in terms of the concept of *intertextuality* created by Kristeva (1980) but thoroughly described earlier by Bakhtin (1986).

Intertextuality appears to be strongly connected with speakers' literacy experiences and skills which enable them to identify the required texts/genres when processing the ones at hand. In particular, scholars highlight the significance of *cultural literacy* involving background knowledge concerning cultural artefacts, historical and political events, etc., which are deemed important in a specific sociocultural context (see among others Hirsch 1980, 1988). On the other hand, some scholars question the preponderance of such literacy skills and instead argue for the necessity of critical literacy skills when processing discourse. Such skills enable speakers to trace more or less latent ideological and discriminatory meanings in discourse. These scholars also suggest that the quest for cultural literacy may even be antagonistic to critical literacy, as the recognition of 'culturally significant' resources and intertexts achieved through cultural literacy may not encourage the critical processing of discourse (Graff 1989; Cadiero-Kaplan 2002).

In this context, I intend to explore how intertextual references contributing to a humorous effect seem to create three sets of opposing groups: (a) those who create/tell the jokes vs. those who are targeted by them; (b) the 'culturally literate' who employ and understand the intertextual references vs. the 'culturally illiterate' who cannot and/or do not do that; and (c) those who agree vs. those who disagree with the ideological presuppositions of the humorous texts at hand. To illustrate these points, I exploit a corpus of Greek jokes referring to the Greek debt crisis. Based on incongruity and superiority theories of humour, the proposed analysis intends to argue, and pave the way, for more critical perspectives on humorous genres, whether outside or inside educational settings. Such perspectives could sensitise speakers to the fact that humour and intertextuality divide them into opposing groups such as the above-mentioned ones.

To this end, Section (2) explores the interplay among intertextuality, cultural literacy, and humour, and its alienating consequences for recipients whose cultural literacy skills may turn out to be 'inadequate' for the processing of humour. Then, in Section (3), I argue for the necessity of moving beyond cultural literacy towards critical literacy so as to enhance speakers' skills in undigging discriminatory or marginalising meanings in humorous texts. That Section discusses the aims and particularities of a critical analysis of humour, taking into consideration previous research. The description of the data, the methodology, and the research questions are included in Section (4), while in Section (5) the analysis of indicative examples demonstrates how intertextual references contributing to the creation of humour may end up establishing ingroups and outgroups. The final Section (6) summarises the content of the paper and suggests further areas of inquiry.

2. Intertextuality, cultural literacy, and the processing of humour

The intricate connections among texts/genres have been thoroughly described by Bakhtin (1986: 68-99) who argues that intertextuality infiltrates everything we say or write. We are surrounded by a network of interrelated texts, each of which may influence the form and/or content of the other. This results from the fact that both the producer and the recipient of a text make specific assumptions concerning each other's available background knowledge that needs to be activated to process discourse. Consequently, communication is based on the intertextual links both the producer and the addressee can trace between the text at hand and pre-existing or upcoming ones (see also Kristeva 1980; Briggs & Bauman 1992; Allen 2000; Gasparov 2010).

More recently, and building on Bakhtin's (1986) discussion, Fairclough (1992) observes that there is an important relationship between intertextuality and *hegemony*. The interpretation of a text including implicit or explicit intertextual references may not always be

possible for all potential recipients. Such references may often be "taken by the producer of the text as already established or 'given'" (Fairclough 1992: 120), but in fact recipients may not always be able or willing to get the allusion. As a result, intertextuality generates discursive representations which divide people into groups. Those recipients who are willing and able to decipher the intertextual allusions, and thus produce an interpretation of the text more or less similar to the one 'intended' by the producer, become part of the ingroup the producer wishes to create via his/her text. On the contrary, those who are reluctant or incapable of establishing the prerequisite intertextual connections are excluded from the ingroup and may also be considered as 'inadequate' recipients. In this sense, intertextuality contributes to the emergence of a distinction between 'informed' and 'inadequate' recipients, and it is eventually used to engage the former and denigrate the latter. In other words, intertextuality acquires an *elitist* function especially in public communication, where participants are not familiar with each other. In informal contexts, where participants know each other well, intertextual allusions may mark and reinforce an intimate knowledge of each other (Adami 2012; see also Duff 2004).

The main criterion for the distinction described above is what Hirsch (1980, 1988) calls *cultural literacy*. Cultural literacy involves a specific amount of 'common' cultural knowledge promoted as such by powerful institutions (e.g. education and the mainstream media). Such knowledge pertains to historical, political, literary, etc. issues and 'needs' to be possessed by 'every adequate' reader, namely by every individual who wishes "to comprehend the messages conveyed through conversation, newspapers and other media that report historical events or engage ideas from world literature and history" (Cadiero-Kaplan 2002: 375). It is thus frequently employed to evaluate speakers as 'informed' and 'inadequate' as well as 'competent' and 'less-competent'.

Due to such discriminatory connotations and functions, the concept and content of cultural literacy have attracted fierce criticism (see among others Graff 1989: 46-51; Paul 1990: 527-528; Cope & Kalantzis 1992: 86-87, 97-100, 113; Johnson et al. 2001: 260-261; Cadiero-Kaplan 2002: 374-376). First of all, it is in principle difficult (if not impossible) to determine what is to be included in 'shared' background knowledge, especially in contemporary multicultural communities. Cultural literacy, as conceived by Hirsch (1980, 1988), provides access to a significant amount of (written and oral) texts circulating in specific sociocultural communities ascribing to Western, upper/middle class, nationalist, etc. traditions and values. People who consider different values and knowledge as 'shared' and perceive different cultural material as part of their cultural literacies are supposed to belong to different communities and are usually excluded from the above-mentioned ones. This is clearly reminiscent of the hegemonic and elitist dimension of intertextuality which attributes ingroup status to specific readers and excludes and denigrates others (see above).[1] Simultaneously, speakers' access to and understanding of previous and perhaps also 'prestigious' texts enhances their social prestige. As Briggs & Bauman (1992: 148) suggest, "[w]hen great authority is invested in texts associated with elders or ancestors, traditionalising discourse by creating links with traditional genres is often the most powerful strategy for creating textual authority".

---

[1] Hirsch's (1980, 1988) proposal for cultural literacy involves what he perceived as 'the American culture' and had an applied orientation: it aimed at reforming the American education via rediscovering the 'Great Books' or 'Classics' from history, literature, science, etc. Here I will use the term *cultural literacy* to refer to both the skills and the knowledge required of readers to establish coherence in discourse, given that the present study touches upon both literacy as a text processing skill and as an educational goal (the latter is discussed mostly in Section 6). Furthermore, the fact that Hirsch limits the scope of cultural literacy to the American culture does not prevent us from using it in the Greek context, where the data analysed comes from.

The second point raised against cultural literacy relates to what is described as a mutually exclusive or antagonistic relationship between cultural and critical literacy. Researchers often suggest that the emphasis placed on cultural literacy for making sense of texts eliminates the possibility of a *critical* approach to the same texts: "[i]n pursuit of cultural literacy [...], any sense of literacy as a dynamic and critical ability is lost" (Graff 1989: 50). More specifically, recipients may feel satisfied and 'adequate' with making sense of the allusion(s) to other 'culturally-significant' texts and, therefore, not proceed with a between-the-lines, critical interpretation of the allusion(s) and, in particular, of their new meanings emerging from the recontextualisation of the alluded material. As a result, recipients' efforts to reach coherent interpretations of texts lead them to acquiesce to, rather than reject, the texts' presuppositions (Graff 1989: 50; Paul 1990: 528; Fairclough 1992: 133-136).

Last but not least, the elitist dimension of cultural literacy would most probably not even encourage speakers to process humorous texts such as jokes, which are the focus of the present study. Speakers 'should' instead concentrate exclusively on prestigious texts/genres, in particular on the 'Classics' and the 'Great Books' which carry 'important' meanings and 'universal' values (cf. Hirsch 1980, 1988; Cadiero-Kaplan 2001: 374). On the contrary, jokes are mundane creations, part of popular culture, that 'could not possibly' carry meanings worth considering. They are (allegedly) 'inconsequential' and 'just for fun'.[2]

A gap could therefore be perceived between cultural literacy and the critical processing of humorous texts. Cultural literacy as a text processing skill enables speakers to use or grasp 'well-known' intertextual references, but not necessarily to reflect on the ideological assumptions involved. Simultaneously, cultural literacy as an ideological construction evaluating discursive practices and genres does not necessarily entail critical approaches to (humorous or other) discourse and could be dismissive of alternative perspectives and popular discursive practices.

Given the above, it seems that both intertextuality and cultural literacy are relevant and significant when discussing the processing of humour (Ziesing 2001: 8; see also the discussions in Hale 2018; Tsakona 2018a, 2018b, 2020b). When interpreting humorous texts, recipients evoke specific scripts, namely previous experiences and knowledge of the world, to make sense of the humorous material at hand (see among others Raskin 1985; Attardo 2001). Humor scholars underline the significance of shared background knowledge in humorous communication and often take for granted that recipients *will* recognise the allusion(s) in a humorous text and *will* be able to establish common ground with the humourist (see among others Norrick 1989: 118, 120, 1993: 69-72, 109).

Still, intertextuality may render humour processing a demanding understanding/intelligence test for the addressee (Sacks 1974; Sherzer 1985: 218-219; Trousdale 2018: 78-81) as well as a reason for "self-gratification" for the humourist who came up with the allusion (Hlynka & Knupfer 1997: 405; Hale 2018: 514). Through the evocation of 'culturally salient' texts and allusions, humourists may enhance their own social prestige and address 'ideal' interactants who are 'well informed' and 'culturally literate', and share a common "cultural memory" with them (Werner 2004). As a result, by enabling (some) humour recipients to identify and interpret references to specialised texts that are perceived as 'common' knowledge, cultural literacy consolidates the distinction between ingroup members, who understand the humorous text at hand and share its values and presuppositions, and outgroup ones, who cannot grasp or deliberately resist the values and presuppositions underlying the humorous text processed.[3]

---

[2] On the negative attitudes towards comic literature in class, see among others Trousdale (2018: 71-73).
[3] On instances of resisted humour, see among others Chovanec (2016).

We can easily understand what this entails when it comes to a potential critical processing of humorous texts. Faced with a text intended or introduced as humorous, and due to their previous experience with various humorous genres, recipients tend to look for a punch line with an unexpected twist or surprise element and focus on deciphering the meaning of the twist or surprise by recalling previous (i.e. intertextual/cultural) experience and recontextualising to fit the (con)text in question. Such an effort to recall and exploit elements from their cultural literacy may distract recipients from scrutinising more or less latent ideological assumptions of the humorous text, for example, aggressive, offensive, or discriminatory content. Hence, a critical reading may be postponed or even cancelled and aggressive, offensive, or discriminatory views may go unnoticed and become naturalised. The same may hold for humour producers: in their effort to come up with a 'clever' twist or surprising punch line, they may overlook the fact that they may make allusions which attack, offend, or marginalise specific individuals or social groups (see among others Park et al. 2006; Santa Ana 2009; Sue & Golash-Boza 2013). While trying to create humour with 'prestigious' intertextual references, thus enhancing their social status and entertaining their audience, a critical processing of their humorous production may not be considered their priority.[4]

To sum up, "intertextuality lies at the heart of humour" (Attardo 2001: 71). Like all texts, humorous ones cannot be processed without recourse to previous texts/genres, whether prestigious or not. When reference is made to 'culturally salient' texts, cultural literacy skills are presupposed and displayed by humourists and are expected to be possessed by recipients. In this sense, "intertextuality is a *collaborative* linguistic transaction of significance to all persons actively participating in that transaction" (Hale 2018: 511, emphasis in the original). When intertextual references remain opaque to recipients, humour acquires an exclusive and elitist function. Moreover, when processing humorous texts including demanding and 'culturally significant' allusions, recipients may frequently become preoccupied with making sense of these allusions and may not delve deeper into other aspects of their meanings. As a result, they may overlook meanings reproducing social discrimination and inequalities, even if the latter undermine their own social status (e.g. by portraying them as outgroup members due to lack of what is perceived as 'shared' background knowledge). It could therefore be suggested that a more critical approach to jokes and other humorous texts could help humour producers and recipients become more aware of the more or less latent discriminatory meanings of humour.

3. Critical literacy and the sociopragmatics of humour

This Section discusses in more detail what a *critical literacy* approach to humour would entail, so as to demonstrate its differences from a cultural literacy one. Such a discussion will simultaneously form the basis for a critical analysis of political jokes (to follow in Section 5).

Critical literacy is derivative of critical approaches to discourse unveiling and scrutinising how discourse (re)produces social inequalities and social injustice (see among others Fairclough 1989; Wodak & Meyer 2001; Blommaert 2005). Critical literacy is premised on

---

[4] It is neither accidental nor irrelevant to the present discussion that, even within humour studies, the ideological assumptions or implications of humorous texts have been framed as insignificant or inconsequential for the analysis of humour. Among others, Raskin (2008: 27) remarks that "the serious-message aspect of humour is marginal and uncommon". In a similar vein, Davies maintains that jokes are "of no consequence to anyone else" (2004: 40) and that "[h]umour does not give offence; its recipients take offence" (2008: 6, emphasis in the original), implying that jokers do not have 'serious' intentions of offending the joke targets; only some recipients may detect 'serious' meanings in jokes and thus feel offended themselves or think that jokes are offensive for somebody else. Thus, critical perspectives on humour are framed as redundant and humour is discursively constructed as innocent, just for fun, and devoid of any sociopolitical implications.

the assumptions that neither discourse nor our interpretations of it are neutral, and that discourse shapes our understandings of the worlds, others, and ourselves. By representing aspects of social reality, texts offer value-laden interpretations of it, whether their producers or recipients are aware of it or not. All texts include and presuppose specific ideologies and evaluations of social reality and thus position not only their producers but also their potential addressees in specific ways in terms of background knowledge and ideological standpoints (see also the discussion of intertextuality and cultural literacy in Section 2).

Given the above, critical literacy aims to assist text producers or recipients in detecting the power relations and ideological standpoints implicitly or explicitly evoked and reproduced in the construction of various texts/genres. It aims to develop speakers' ability to expose how texts may be infused with manifestations of social inequality (e.g. racism, sexism, classism, and linguistic discrimination), thus perpetuating discrimination against specific social groups. In this sense, critical literacy brings to the surface the hegemonic power of discourse. Although critical literacy is often associated with academic and educational settings, where it may be cultivated, it can also be conceptualised in a broader sense as an attitude towards texts, a *social activity*, and eventually as part of public life (Wallace 2003: 189; Vasquez 2004: 1; Beck 2005: 392, 394). A similar distinction has been made for cultural literacy (in Section 2): it is perceived as a text processing skill (cf. an attitude towards texts) and as an educational goal attained through the curriculum (cf. a skill cultivated in academic and educational settings). Furthermore, even though literacy traditionally refers to processing written forms of discourse, several approaches to critical literacy involve both written and oral skills, as they seem to be inseparable in everyday literacy practices (see among others Baynham 1995; Cadiero-Kaplan 2002: 377; Archakis & Tsakona 2012).

One of the most important skills cultivated by/within critical literacy is what Behrman (2006: 493-494) calls *reading from a resistant perspective* (see also Fairclough 1992: 136). Mostly due to school education, text recipients are usually trained or even forced to look for and eventually converge with the 'intended' meaning of the text, namely an interpretation attributed to the author of the text by dominant institutions (e.g. the school) and more often than not adhering to dominant values and views. Such practices deliberately prevent recipients from coming up with deviant, resistant readings of a text and from questioning the values and ideologies presupposed in it. On the contrary, reading from a resistant perspective incites recipients to revisit and disagree with the standpoints, values, and knowledge they often take for granted, and to gain some distance from their own ideological presuppositions.

A critical literacy approach is, in my view, most compatible with the analysis of humour, as it could familiarise speakers with diverse sociopragmatic functions of humour. Sociopragmatic research on humour has brought to the surface a wide range of potential humorous effects, thus underlining the fact that humour is never 'just for fun'. As extensively discussed in the relevant literature, we use humour to build rapport, establish common values and views, reinforce intimacy, mitigate face threats, criticise, disparage or attack the 'other', enhance our own popularity, etc. (see Chovanec & Tsakona 2018: 6 and references therein). Without a critical eye on humour, such sociopragmatic functions and effects may go unnoticed by speakers who may acquiesce to humour's ideological presuppositions in their effort to establish coherence and comprehend the meanings and intertextual allusions of humorous texts (see Section 2; also Tsakona 2018a, 2018b; Constantinou 2019, and references therein).

The aggressive or discriminating sociopragmatic effects of humour are accounted for mostly in terms of the *superiority/aggression theories of humour* proposing that humour (re)constructs relations of power: humourists portray themselves as superior and attack the 'inferior' others for their 'foibles' (see among others Raskin 1985: 36-38; Attardo 1994: 49-50; Morreall 2009: 4-9). *Incongruity theories* are not irrelevant as they help us identify what these 'foibles' are and why they are framed as such. In other words, in accounting for why and

how specific individuals or groups are perceived as incongruous and targeted for the deviant behaviour, superiority and incongruity theories are complementary and could indeed form a suitable basis for a critical approach to humour (see also Raskin 1985: 40; Attardo & Raskin 2017: 55; Archakis & Tsakona 2005, 2019).

So far, our discussion concerning the interplay among intertextuality, cultural literacy, critical literacy, and humour has highlighted the discriminatory and exclusive aspects of humour, which can take (at least) three forms: first, humour denigrates and attacks individuals or groups perceived as 'inferior' or 'inadequate' in their roles and intertextual allusions may play a significant role in this process; second, humour may denigrate those who are not able to reach its 'intended' meaning including the intertextual references that are part of it; and, third, humour may alienate those who do not agree with its ideological presuppositions (which may, among other things, involve offensive or discriminatory standpoints; see above).

Such effects have already been explored from a critical literacy point of view in a limited (so far) number of studies (for an overview, see Tsakona 2020a: 163-168; see also Tsakona 2019). Due to space limitations, and given that the data examined here include political jokes, I will briefly refer to those studies which critically discuss the role of intertextuality in political humour.

Exploring political cartoons within a critical literacy framework, Janks et al. (2014: 91-97) focus on both the visual and verbal elements of cartoons by examining how cartoon characters are physically portrayed, what events take place in the cartoons, what words are attributed to the characters, and what meanings could be derived from the represented events (Janks et al. 2014: 91). They also take into consideration the cartoons' context of publication as well as the wider sociopolitical context. They underscore the fact that

> political cartoons are positioned and positioning. […] [Their] *choices* shape the way we interpret the cartoon, working to position us as *ideal readers* who share the cartoonist's attitude. But as critical readers we should be able to use or own beliefs and values to challenge the text. If we find the cartoon's assumptions problematic and we choose not to go along with them, we become *resistant readers*.
>
> (Janks et al. 2014: 91, emphasis in the original)

In this context, Janks et al. (2014) specifically explore the significant role intertextuality plays in the creation and interpretation of political cartoons: intertextuality may engage readers in making connections between the cartoons and previous texts, thus inviting (if not forcing) the readers to make more or less the same associations with their cartoonists and acquiesce to the latter's ideological standpoints. A critical analysis of political cartoons, these authors suggest, is important as it could enable us to realise that the allusions included therein exhibit a strong but not always explicit evaluative function, and eventually could lead not necessarily to conformist readings but to resistant ones.

In a similar vein, the significance of tracing intertextual connections between political cartoons and other texts within a critical literacy framework is also highlighted by Werner (2004) who suggests that political cartoons often carry unquestioned hegemonic assumptions concerning politics and cultural memory, thus naturalising certain stereotypes of political figures and events in the public sphere.

Gasteratou (2016) discusses the exploitation of political comics and cartoons within a critical literacy framework, so as to sensitise L2 learners to the sociopolitical particularities of the Greek cultural context. In her proposal, critical literacy is expected to enable learners to scrutinise political values, views, and stereotypes which are widespread among Greeks and concern politicians' hypocrisy, corruption, and unreliability. The exploited material includes intertextual links to recent developments in Greece after the eruption of the debt crisis. In Gasteratou's (2016) proposal, emphasis is placed on the incongruities and targets of the

humorous data examined, so as to reveal and scrutinise the ideological presuppositions and the positions expressed by the producers of such texts and expected to be identified by their recipients as allusions to the Greek political context.

In the next Section, I move on to the data used in the present study and then to the analysis of specific examples so as to illustrate how a critical approach to political jokes could highlight their denigrating content and effect and, in particular, how intertextual allusions contribute to this effect.

4. Data and methodology

The material used in the present study includes political jokes which are, in general, built around the discrepancies between the actual state of political affairs and the (often idealised) image of how political issues should or could be. Joke tellers select specific aspects of politicians' behaviours or political events and represent them as incongruous, unexpected, or abnormal. To this end, they establish intertextual links with a wide variety of other (con)texts, such as political speeches and decisions, public deliberations on political issues, accounts of socioeconomic conditions, political criticism, etc. (see Tsakona 2015, 2018a, 2018b, and references therein). The present study will leave aside the intertextual allusions to strictly political figures, decisions, events, etc., so as to highlight the background knowledge or cultural literacy exploited by the producers of such jokes and required of their potential recipients. More specifically, the data examined here come from a large corpus of canned political jokes referring to the Greek financial crisis and collected from January 15, 2010 to December 12, 2013 (596 jokes). All of them were circulated online and were sent to the author's personal email account by friends and relatives. None of the emails received was excluded from the collection and, at the same time, no other material was added by the author (e.g. downloaded from websites or coming from printed collections; see also Tsakona 2015, 2017a, 2017b, 2018a, 2018b, 2020a: 33-48, 2020c).

The Greek financial crisis started at the end of 2009 and, ever since then, the financial landscape in Greece has changed dramatically. Due to austerity measures, salaries and pensions were cut off, the minimum wage was lowered, taxes were significantly increased, unemployment started to grow rapidly, and at the same time labour laws were liberalised. In addition, a significant decrease in public expenditure and the privatisation of state-owned enterprises led to the deterioration of the social services provided by the state (e.g. health, education, transportation). The standards of living for the majority of Greeks became (much) worse, the (lower) middle classes were strangled, a significant number of Greeks became homeless, and the number of crimes and suicides increased, especially in the big cities. Only within a few months' time, anxiety, frustration, and disappointment grew higher and higher among Greeks due to the new economic conditions. In this context, and in the eyes of the citizens, politicians were incapable of handling the new conditions and of protecting people from the consequences of the crisis. They were accused, among other things, of corruption, indifference, inconsistency between pre-electoral promises and post-electoral actions, and of being unable to strike a balance between the measures imposed by the creditors and the EU, on the one hand, and the wishes and needs of the Greek people, on the other (on the consequences of the debt crisis in Greece, see among others Markantonatou 2013; Ellinas 2015; Theocharis & van Deth 2015; Hatzidaki & Goutsos 2017; Tsakona 2017b: 139-141, and references therein).

The proposed critical literacy approach to political jokes is premised on their investigation from a discourse analytic perspective. Besides, as Rogers & Mosley Wetzel (2014: 1) suggest, "[c]ritical literacy is not possible without discourse analysis". Taking into consideration the

critical questions on humour (in Section 3), the aim of the following analysis is two-fold. First, I will identify which intertextual allusions humourists employ to frame certain actions and/or figures as incongruous. This is what Fairclough (2000: 170) calls an *intertextual analysis*, which "identifies genres and discourses that the text draws upon, and the ways they are articulated together". By identifying the texts alluded to, I will show that speakers' cultural literacy skills are presupposed for the processing of humour. Simultaneously, I will use the concepts of *script opposition* and *target of humour* as described within the *General Theory of Verbal Humour* (Attardo 2001). Script opposition accounts for the incongruities humour is based on and target reveals who/what is framed as deviant and inferior (see the discussion of incongruity and superiority/aggression theories in Section 3). I will thus demonstrate that the intertextual references denigrate those who cannot detect and understand them, those who are humorously framed as responsible for 'improper' or 'inadequate' behaviour, and simultaneously exclude those who disagree with their ideological assumptions. This kind of analysis could, in my view, form the basis for adopting a critical perspective towards humorous texts, in general, and the allusions included therein, in particular.

5. Data analysis

Political jokes on the Greek crisis may, first, employ allusions to classical texts to convey their criticism:[5]

(1) Μια σαλάτα του Καίσαρα 6,90. Λογικά πρέπει να την κράταγε και όταν ήρθε και όταν είδε και όταν νίκησε.

A Caesar's salad [costs] €6.90. Obviously [Julius] Caesar must have held it when he came and when he saw and when he conquered.

In joke (1), reference is made to the well-known quotation *Veni, vidi, vici* 'I came, I saw, I conquered' attributed to Julius Caesar after his quick victory in the Battle of Zela (according to Plutarch's *The Life of Julius Caesar*). The joker thus humorously comments on the incongruously high prices of a Caesar's salad in Greece; during the financial crisis, Greeks cannot afford such an expensive salad anymore. S/he suggests that the salad must have been (made and) held by Julius Caesar himself; otherwise, it would not have been that expensive. Recipients are expected to understand that a pun is involved here between Caesar's salad (owing its name to the Italian chef Caesar Cardini who first created it) and Julius Caesar's quotation. If they are not familiar with Julius Caesar's quotation, they cannot understand the script opposition between a typical, well-known Caesar's salad and a fictional, unreal one held by Julius Caesar in one of his glorious victories. Through this classical/historical allusion, the owners of the restaurant where the salad is served are targeted for excessive prices. Simultaneously, the then Greek government is indirectly criticised for heavy taxation raising salad prices (among other prices). Consequently, both the recipients who miss the allusion and those responsible for excessive prices (e.g. politicians, restaurant owners) are projected as outgroups and targeted via humour. In addition, those who could afford such a salad may

---

[5] All the data presented here was translated by the author for the purposes of the present study. Some humour may be lost on the way. Unconventional spelling was maintained in the Greek original texts, but was not reproduced in the English translations. Square brackets include additional explanatory material. It should also be noted that due to space limitations, short jokes were preferred to longer ones (which were more than one page long in several cases and included multiple and more complex intertextual references). Short jokes also proved relatively easier to translate.

consider the joker's evaluation to be exaggerated, hence they may not agree with the joker's assessment of the situation.

Joke (2) includes a Biblical allusion with a similar alienating effect:

(2) - Καλημέρα. Έχετε τρόφιμα;
- Ναι. Είσαι Έλληνας;
- Δεν υπάρχει Ιουδαίος και Έλληνας, δεν υπάρχει δούλος και ελεύθερος, δεν υπάρχει άντρας και γυναίκα...
- Ποιος είσαι ρε;
- Ονομάζομαι Ιησούς. Είμαι εβραίος.
- Χάσου από δω ρε. Είναι μόνο για Έλληνες λέμε.

- Good morning. Do you have any food [for the poor]?
- Yes. Are you Greek?
- There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female…
- Who are you dude?
- My name is Jesus. I am Jewish.
- You get out of here. It's only for Greeks, I told you.

Joke (2) refers to and targets the members of the Greek extreme-right, neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn, who used to organise charity meals exclusively for Greek citizens, thus excluding migrants, refugees, etc. living in Greece. Even though Golden Dawn members are supposed to be religious fanatics, here they are represented to ignore Christian values and texts. The joke recontextualises the well-known quotation from St. Paul's *Epistle to the Galatians* (3:28) *Δεν υπάρχει Ιουδαίος και Έλληνας, δεν υπάρχει δούλος και ελεύθερος, δεν υπάρχει άντρας και γυναίκα* 'There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female'. The humourist's aim is to criticise Golden Dawn's discriminatory practice of organising charity meals exclusively for Greek citizens, because this practice clashes with Christian values. In the original text (i.e. St. Paul's *Epistle to the Galatians* 3:28), the word used for *Gentile* is *Έλλην* which literally means 'Greek', so the script opposition emerges as follows: "charity meals should be organised for everybody in need/are organised exclusively for people of Greek origin". Joke recipients are expected to recognise the quotation, so as to grasp the script opposition between the Christian values supposedly embraced by Golden Dawn members and their exclusive, racist practices. Thus, Golden Dawn members and potential recipients not familiar and/or agreeing with Christian texts and the respective values are projected as outgroups through the use of humour.

Mythological references are also present in the data under scrutiny:

(3) Η Ελλάδα είναι αναπόσπαστο κομμάτι της Ευρώπης, που την εγάμησεν ο Ζεύς ως ταύρος - αλλιώς δεν εξηγούνται τόσα βόδια στη Βουλή.

Greece is an indispensable part of Europe, who was fucked by Zeus transformed into a bull - there is no other way to explain the presence of so many oxen in the [Greek] parliament.

Joke (3) presupposes recipients' familiarity with Greek mythology, in particular with the myth of Europe's abduction by Zeus who was transformed into a bull. The allusion creates a pun on the Greek word *βόδι* 'ox', which is also used to insult someone as stupid and incapable of handling anything. The emerging script oppositions involve, on the one hand, "Greek parliamentarians are citizens of Europe/children of Europe and Zeus when the latter transformed into a bull" and "parliamentarians are fulfilling their institutional roles properly/are 'oxen', namely stupid and inadequate in their roles". Hence, Greek parliamentarians are humorously portrayed and targeted as inadequate in their role. At the

same time, the joke is intended to be understood and appreciated by recipients capable of making (and also acquiescing to) the connection between this 'inadequacy' and the Ancient Greek myth of Europe and Zeus; otherwise, they will not be able to grasp the joke.

More recent but still exclusive allusions are also attested in the data examined here. For instance, fairytales become intertextual resources for Greek humourists:

(4) Ψήφισε Αλί Μπαμπά. Έχει μόνο 40 κλέφτες.

Vote for Ali Baba. He has only 40 thieves.

(5) Έχουν παγώσει τα δάχτυλά μου στο πληκτρολόγιο. Θα με βρουν κοκαλωμένο στο λάπτοπ και θα γίνω το κοριτσάκι με τα πλήκτρα.

My fingers are freezing on the keyboard. They will find me frozen in front of my laptop and I will become the little key girl.

Joke (4) alludes to the Middle-Eastern folk tale of "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves" from *The Arabian Nights: Tales of 1,001 Nights* (2010 [1706]): Ali Baba is here preferred to Greek parliamentary parties, because he only has forty thieves, while the Greek Parliament has 300 members who are implicitly compared to, and targeted as, thieves to create humour. The scripts opposed involve "politicians as honest people who care for the citizens/politicians as thieves who steal from the citizens". Establishing coherence in this joke presupposes the acceptance of the evaluative comparison between Greek parliamentarians and Ali Baba's thieves. Those joke recipients who would not be able or willing to make this comparison, and hence assess parliamentarians as more dangerous for the country than thieves, would be excluded from the ingroup potentially created by the humourist and those who align with him/her.

In joke (5), humour is based on a pun: *Το κοριτσάκι με τα σπίρτα* 'The Little Match Girl', (i.e. the title of a fairytale by H. C. Andersen 2015 [1845]) becomes *το κοριτσάκι με τα πλήκτρα* 'the little key girl'. Thus, a script opposition is created: "the little match girl died because of the cold while selling matches on the street/the little key girl will die because of the cold at home in front of her computer". Both girls die because of the extreme cold; the Greek one because she cannot afford to pay for heating, which is a problem many Greeks have faced since the beginning of the financial crisis. Before the financial crisis, Greeks were not in danger of dying from the cold, but in crisis-ridden Greece this does not seem impossible. Through this allusion, the Greek government is indirectly targeted for not caring for the living conditions of the Greek people and accused of raising the fuel prices so much that people can no longer afford to pay for heating. Readers unfamiliar with Andersen's fairytale would not be able to make the connection between the two girls who die because of the cold, thus they would miss the joke. In addition, there could be readers who would not ideologically agree with the criticism of the joke (e.g. they would not consider fuel prices as too high or would not consider the government as responsible for raising them) and, as a result, would not share the critical perspective of the joke.

Allusions to events and figures from Greek history are also present in this set of data, as the following examples demonstrate:

(6) Είναι κρίμα που χάσαμε την Πόλη το 1453, γιατί σήμερα θα μπορούσαμε να την πουλήσουμε.

It is a pity that we lost Constantinople/Istanbul in 1453, because today we could sell it.

(7) -Γεια σας. Είμαστε ρακένδυτοι, πεινάμε πολύ, είμαστε αποκαμωμένοι.

-Τι θέλετε όλοι εσείς εδώ ρε; Είστε Έλληνες;
-Όχι κύριε. Είμαστε ξένοι. Γάλλοι, Γερμανοί, Ιταλοί, Πολωνοί, Σουηδοί. Είμαστε το τάγμα των
Φιλελλήνων. Πολεμήσαμε για την Ελλάδα το 21, στη μάχη του Πέτα, στο Κομπότι. Σκοτωθήκαμε
για την Ελλάδα. Υπάρχει μνημείο για μας στην πλατεία του Ναυπλίου. Να κι εδώ δίπλα στο
Σύνταγμα υπάρχει οδός αφιερωμένη σε μας. Φιλελλήνων λέγεται.
-Να πάτε στο διάολο ρε. Εδώ είναι μόνο για Έλληνες. Στα τσακίδια ρε.

-Hello. We are ragamuffins, we are starving, we are exhausted.
-What are you all doing here? Are you Greeks?
-No sir. We are foreigners. [We are] French, German, Italian, Polish, Swedish. We are the
Battalion of Philhellenes.[6] We fought for Greece in 1821 in the battle of Peta, in [the battle of]
Komboti. We were killed for Greece. There is a monument for us on Nafplio's [central] square.
Near here at Syntagma square [in Athens] there is a street dedicated to us. It is called Filellinon
[i.e. street of the Philhellenes].
-Go to hell! This is only for Greeks. Get lost!

Joke (6) intertextually refers to the fall of Constantinople/Istanbul in 1453. Formerly the
capital of the Byzantine Empire, Constantinople/Istanbul became part of the Ottoman Empire.
Contemporary Greeks often perceive Constantinople/Istanbul as a former Greek city that was
taken by the Turks. Besides these historical and nationalist allusions, this joke contains an
allusion to contemporary Greek political reality: during the crisis, and as part of the
agreements with its creditors, the Greek state was forced to privatise state companies and
property, so as to reduce state expenses, among other things. So, Constantinople/Istanbul is
here incongruously represented as former Greek property which could be sold/privatised by
the Greek state, if it were not currently part of Turkey. So the script opposition emerges as
follows: "Constantinople/Istanbul could not/could be sold or privatised". In other words, there
is a clash between the historical/nationalist discourse highlighting the symbolic significance of
Constantinople/Istanbul for Greeks and the contemporary neoliberal discourse favouring the
privatisation of state property to reduce public expenditure. Neoliberal discourse is targeted as
incongruous because it seems to contrast with the feelings of many nationalist Greeks. More
specifically, this joke targets the Greek government for selling out invaluable assets of the
Greek state and, at the same time, alienates those who cannot recognise the historical allusion
and/or those who may not perceive Istanbul as a (former) Greek city (i.e. they disagree with
the ideological, nationalist presuppositions of the joke).

Joke (7) presupposes familiarity with a fact of the Greek Independence War against
Ottoman Turks (1821-1830): people from inside and outside Europe arrived at Greece to fight
together with local soldiers forming the Battalion of Philhellenes (see footnote 6). The joke is
a variation of joke (2) and targets Golden Dawn members for ignorance of historical
knowledge as well as for racist practices during the charity meals they organise exclusively for
Greeks in need. This time, the members of the extreme right-wing neo-Nazi party of Golden
Dawn are portrayed as refusing to offer their support to non-Greek soldiers who gave their
lives for Greek Independence, because the latter are not of Greek origin. In other words, even
though they claim to be nationalists and fiercely defend such ideals, here they are projected as
ignorant of Greek history and as ungrateful to those who contributed to Greek independence.
The script oppositions could be articulated as follows: "Golden Dawn members know/ignore
Greek history"; "charity meals should be organised for everybody in need/are organised

---

[6] The Battalion of Philhellenes consisted of non-Greek soldiers who arrived at Greece to fight for the
independence of Greece against the Ottoman Turks (see among others St Clair 2008 [1972]). Peta and Komboti
are names of villages in Western Greece where battles took place during the Independence War. Nafplio is a city
in the Peloponnese, where a monument has been erected to the memory of the Philhellenes. Filellinon street in
the centre of Athens, the Greek capital, is also dedicated to them.

exclusively for people of Greek origin" (see also joke 2). Besides Golden Dawn's nationalism and racism, the joke excludes those who ignore the history (and importance) of the Battalion of Philhellenes (whether they are members of Golden Dawn or not), as they would not be able to grasp the intertextual reference.

Allusions related to other cultures, such as the US American one, are also attested in the jokes examined here:

(8) Συζητούσα με κάποιον Αμερικάνο και μου λέει:
Εμείς στην Αμερική έχουμε Barach Obama, Stevie Wonder, Bob Hope, Johnny Cash, εσείς???
Εμείς του λέω έχουμε George Papandreou, No Wonder, No Hope, No Cash.[7]

I was talking to an American and he says to me:
In America we have Barack Obama, Stevie Wonder, Bob Hope, Johnny Cash - what do you have?
I tell him, we have George Papandreou, no wonder, no hope, no cash.

(9) Δεν διάβασα το Μνημόνιο γιατί δεν έχω χρόνο. Την ημέρα είμαι υπουργός και τα βράδια είμαι ο Batman και κυνηγάω κακοποιούς.

I did not read the Memorandum, because I don't have time. During the day I am Minister and during the night I am Batman and I chase criminals.

Joke (8) humorously implies that with George Papandreou as a Prime Minister at the beginning of the financial crisis, Greece could not wish for a miracle (e.g. to save Greek economy from bankruptcy) and was deprived of hope (to overcome the crisis) and money (salaries and pensions were reduced due to cutback in public expenditure; see Section 4). It therefore targets George Papandreou as an 'incompetent' politician, who 'failed' in rescuing the country from the financial crisis, thus depriving Greek people of hope for a better tomorrow. Such criticism is achieved through references to famous Americans: Barack Obama is evoked to be implicitly compared with George Papandreou, while the family names of the artists Stevie Wonder, Bob Hope, and Johnny Cash are employed to create puns (*no wonder, no hope, no cash*) humorously describing the current conditions in Greece. The script opposition is created between the initial script of the 'lucky' USA, which has well-known and successful or talented people (i.e. Barack Obama, Stevie Wonder, Bob Hope, and Johnny Cash), and, on the other hand, the second script of 'unlucky' Greece, which has George Papandreou as a Prime Minister and hence can supposedly neither hope for a wonder nor wish for hope and cash, which would help to improve the situation Greek people have found themselves in. Grasping the script opposition depends on cultural knowledge about who the alluded persons are and what their family names mean as common nouns in English. It simultaneously presupposes (or proposes) that joke recipients agree with such an evaluative account of the sociopolitical context in Greece, namely they share the political assessment concerning the then Prime Minister and his alleged responsibility for the problems Greece was facing at that time. Otherwise, humour will fail.

Last but not least, another popular cultural reference with US origin is the source of humour in joke (9). This joke parodies a statement by Minister M. Chrisochoidis when the first Memorandum was signed by the Greek government, the European Central Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the European Commission in spring 2010. Although Chrisochoidis was a prominent member of that government, he publicly admitted that he voted for the Memorandum without having read (any part of) it. His statement was heavily criticised

---

[7] This must be an adaptation of an earlier political joke circulating inside and outside Greece. Although tracing the trajectories of crisis jokes appears to be an intriguing endeavour, it falls outside the scope of the present study.

as cynical and frivolous by the media and the citizens. The joke reproduces such criticism. The Minister is humorously portrayed as the comic/film hero Batman, who protected his hometown Gotham City from criminals at night, but never in daylight. So, the emerging script oppositions are "the Minister should have/has not read the whole Memorandum text" and "the Minister is not/is Batman". Batman's choice and the subsequent analogy established between him and the minister seem to constitute a political allusion to Chrisochoidis' term of office as Minister for Public Order (1999-2003) and Minister for Citizen Protection (2009-2010). Joke recipients are expected to be familiar with Batman's story as well as to share the ideological presuppositions of the joke including, among other things, that the Minister should have read the whole Memorandum text before voting for it and that he has been a successful protector of the Greek citizens during his terms of office as a Minister for Public Order and Citizen Protection. Such presuppositions are reproduced (and perhaps reinforced) through this humorous text.[8]

The examples presented here illustrate only some of the references which are projected as 'common' knowledge among Greek joke tellers and recipients (for more examples, see Tsakona 2018a). They come from (con)texts projected as 'well-known' such as classical and religious texts, Greek mythology and history as well as American politics and popular culture. Joke comprehension seems to rely on the recognition and 'proper' interpretation of such allusions. It could therefore be suggested that the joke-tellers creating and circulating such texts manage to project themselves as capable of handling such allusions and of creating humour with them. At the same time, they appear to expect their addressees to (be able to) do the same, if humour is to succeed. Therefore, intertextual references are employed to target not only those who are perceived as responsible for what happens in Greece during the crisis (in the examples above, mostly politicians), but also those who may not be able to identify the allusions and/or agree with the ideological presuppositions they carry with them or create in the new contexts. Three sets of opposing groups are therefore brought to the limelight through a critical analysis:

(a) those who suffer from the consequences of the crisis (ingroup 1) and those who are framed as responsible for it (outgroup 1); Greek speakers are mostly included in the ingroup except for politicians, political parties, and Greek governments, who are placed in the outgroup;

(b) the 'culturally literate' who employ and understand the intertextual references (ingroup 2) and the 'culturally illiterate' who do not, hence they cannot reach the 'intended' humorous meaning(s) of the jokes (outgroup 2); and

(c) those who share the joker's evaluations concerning the Greek sociopolitical reality and its people (ingroup 3) and those who may disagree with such sociopolitical evaluations and are not willing to laugh at the expense of the suggested targets (outgroup 3).

---

[8] One of the anonymous reviewers has observed that, when discussing the potential of cultural allusions to alienate interpretants, there is a world of difference between a classical reference and a popular culture reference. This is indeed a valid point, especially if we take into consideration that, depending on their sociocultural characteristics and identities (e.g. age, ethnicity, gender, social class), some speakers would be more familiar with classical references (e.g. those espousing the significance of cultural literacy in Hirsch's 1980, 1988 sense; see Section 2) and some others would be more familiar with popular culture references (e.g. those resisting the values of cultural literacy). To use some of the allusions discussed here, some people may be familiar with St. Paul's quotation (example 2) and ignore who Batman is and what he does (example 9) – and vice versa. In other words, different allusions included in different jokes would alienate different groups of people. Underestimating the alienating effect of popular culture references implies that such references are perceived as more accessible and well-known than classical ones, a point that needs to be further investigated specifically for the people exchanging the data analysed here, and lies far beyond the scope of the present study.

It therefore seems that intertextual references and the cultural literacy required to detect and interpret them in a 'coherent' manner end up drawing multiple boundaries among interlocutors on the basis of ideological presuppositions. Focusing on deciphering the intertextual references and making 'proper' sense of them may lead to overlooking the ideological presuppositions of humorous texts, thus delaying or even cancelling a more critical analysis and perspective on them.

6. Concluding remarks

The present study is premised on the fact that intertextuality is the *sine qua non* for humour. More specifically, it has concentrated on intertextual references relying on and demanding speakers' cultural literacy skills. It has been shown that political humour may often allude to 'culturally salient' texts whose knowledge is usually taken for granted. At the same time, some scholars suggest that, when speakers resort to their cultural literacy skills to create or interpret discourse, they may end up overlooking the discriminatory or elitist meanings emerging therein (see Section 2). The need for a critical perspective on humorous texts and their intertextual references is thus highlighted. A critical analysis strengthening speakers' critical literacy skills could enable them to detect and scrutinise more or less latent meanings (re)producing denigration and hostility in the texts at hand.

Here I have used political jokes including 'prestigious' allusions to illustrate how a critical analysis could be performed, concentrating on (at least) three aspects:

(a) the denigration of individuals or groups who are framed to behave in an unexpected, incongruous, and hence inadmissible manner. In the data examined here, these are mostly politicians or everyone who is held responsible for the crisis and its repercussions on the Greek people;

(b) the exclusion of those who are not capable of reaching the 'intended' meaning(s) through interpreting the intertextual references included in humorous texts; and

(c) the alienation of those who do not share the same ideological standpoints and values, namely do not acquiesce to the evaluations (re)produced through humour.

The necessity for critical readings and analyses of humour have recently been underlined as scholars delve into the ways humorous texts may perpetuate discrimination, social inequality, and hostility against individuals or groups (see Section 3). Simultaneously, speakers' critical literacy as the social practice of unveiling more or less hidden discriminatory values and views in discourse is expected to be encouraged and cultivated through an in-depth analysis of texts, whether inside or outside educational contexts. It could therefore be suggested that jokes or other humorous texts/genres could become part of literacy courses so as to sensitise students to the denigrating and aggressive meanings and connotations of humour (see among others Werner 2004; Archakis & Tsakona 2012; Tsakona 2013, 2019, 2020a; Janks et al. 2014; Fterniati et al. 2015; Gasteratou 2016; Trousdale 2018). Given that a "playful turn" is nowadays attested in education (Bell & Pomerantz 2016: 5) and humour is increasingly present in school interactions and teaching materials, the exploitation of humorous texts to enhance students' critical literacy could be an interesting and challenging endeavour (see also Bell & Pomerantz 2016: 177-178; Hempelmann 2016). Among other things, such exploitation could help students realise that jokes are not 'inconsequential' texts and 'just for fun', but may divide people into (opposing) groups and reproduce social exclusion and inequality.

Needless to say, such a critical approach to humour and intertextuality could be performed to different sets of data (e.g. jokes with racist or sexist content) and perhaps yield even more revealing and useful results (see Tsakona 2019, 2020a: 168-188). In such contexts, it is important to concentrate on the boundaries humorous texts draw dividing people into various ingroups and outgroups (see above and Section 5). Making sense of humorous discourse would rather not entail exclusively identifying and deciphering the intertextual references included therein. Readers would rather move beyond tracing humorous incongruities and reaching the 'intended' meaning of humorous texts. The present analysis has tried to underline the significance of a more in-depth, critical, and perhaps even *resistant* reading of humorous discourse (see Fairclough 1992, Behrman 2006, and Janks et al. 2014: 91 in Section 3). In other words, rather than confirming and perhaps expanding on cultural literacy skills, we could cultivate our ability to read between the humorous lines, namely our critical skills towards humour.

One of the limitations of the present study involves the investigation of the relation among humour, intertextuality, *and taste*. Such an endeavour would definitely shed more light on how speakers' social characteristics and identities correlate with their (dis)preferences for specific kinds of humorous texts or contents. It would also allow us to explore if and how allusions to 'prestigious' texts are deciphered and/or appreciated more/less by speakers with specific sociocultural characteristics. An in-depth examination of the different styles in joke appreciation would require different methodological steps and data collection processes (see Kuipers 2006; Friedman 2011, 2013) and therefore lies beyond the scope of this study.

To sum up, the analysis offered here has taken into consideration the incongruity and superiority/aggression theories of humour and could be perceived as a step towards critical and resistant readings of humour. As already mentioned, other kinds of jokes or humorous texts could also become the objects of critical readings in class and different kinds of questions may be posed to texts and their recipients. The examples and the analytical goals explored here are indicative and could be adapted or enriched so as to suit each different contexts or groups of students. This would be most compatible with critical literacy principles and goals which need to be "continually redefined in practice" (Comber 1993: 82). Hopefully, more research will bring to the surface more ways of promoting critical perspectives on humorous discourse.

Acknowledgements

References

Adami, E. (2012). 'The rhetoric of the implicit and the politics of representation in the age of copy-and-paste'. *Learning, Media and Technology* 37 (2), pp. 131-144.
Allen, G. (2000). *Intertextuality*. London: Routledge.
Andersen, H. C. (2015 [1845]). *The Little Match Girl*, trans. J. Hersholt. Retrieved August 17, 2019 from http://www.andersen.sdu.dk/vaerk/hersholt/TheLittleMatchGirl_e.html.
Archakis, A. & Tsakona, V. (2005). 'Analysing conversational data in GTVH terms: A new approach to the issue of identity construction via humour'. *Humour: International Journal of Humour Research* 18 (1), pp. 41-68.
Archakis, A. & Tsakona, V. (2012). *The Narrative Construction of Identities in Critical Education*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Archakis, A. & Tsakona, V. (2019). 'Racism in recent Greek migrant jokes'. *Humour: International Journal of Humour Research* 32 (2), pp. 267-287.

Attardo, S. (1994). *Linguistic Theories of Humour*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Attardo, S. (2001). *Humorous Texts: A Semantic and Pragmatic Analysis*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Attardo, S. & Raskin, V. (2017). 'Linguistics and humour theory', in Attardo, S. (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Humour*, New York: Routledge, pp. 49-63.

Bakhtin, M. (1986). *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Baynham, M. (1995). *Literacy Practices: Investigating Literacy in Social Contexts*. London: Longman.

Beck, A. S. (2005). 'A place for critical literacy'. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy* 48 (5), pp. 392-400.

Behrman, E. H. (2006). 'Teaching about language, power, and text: A review of classroom practices that support critical literacy'. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy* 49 (6), pp. 490-498.

Bell, N. D. & Pomerantz, A. (2016). *Humour in the Classroom: A Guide for Language Teachers and Educational Researchers*. New York: Routledge.

Blommaert, J. (2005). *Discourse: A Critical Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Briggs, C. L. & Bauman, R. (1992). 'Genre, intertextuality and social power'. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 2 (2), pp. 131-172.

Cadiero-Kaplan, K. (2002). 'Literacy ideologies: Critically engaging the language arts curriculum'. *Language Arts* 79 (5), pp. 372-381.

Chovanec, J. (2016). 'Eavesdropping on media talk: Microphone gaffes and unintended humour in sports broadcasts'. *Journal of Pragmatics* 95, pp. 93-106.

Chovanec, J. & Tsakona, V. (2018). 'Investigating the dynamics of humour: Towards a theory of interactional humour', in Tsakona, V. & Chovanec, J. (eds.), *The Dynamics of Interactional Humour: Creating and Negotiating Humour in Everyday Encounters*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins, pp. 1-26.

Comber, B. (1993). 'Classroom explorations in critical literacy'. *The Australian Journal of Language and Literacy* 16 (1), pp. 73-83.

Constantinou, M. (2019). 'Charlie Hebdo's controversial cartoons in question: Stances, translational narratives and identity construction from a cross-linguistic perspective'. *Social Semiotics* 29 (5), pp. 698-727.

Cope, B. & Kalantzis, M. (1992). 'Contradictions in the Canon: Nationalism and the cultural literacy debate'. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 12 (2), pp. 85-115.

Davies, C. (2004). 'The right to joke (Research report 37)'. Great Britain: The Social Affairs Unit, St. Edmundsbury Press. Retrieved November 17, 2018 from http://socialaffairsunit.org.uk/digipub/index2.php?option=content&do_pdf=1&id=11.

Davies, C. (2008). 'The Danish cartoons, the Muslims and the new battle of Jutland', in Lewis, P. (ed.), *The Muhammad Cartoons and Humour Research: A Collection of Essays*. *Humour: International Journal of Humour Research* 21 (1), pp. 2-7.

Duff, P. A. (2004). 'Intertextuality and hybrid discourses: The infusion of pop culture in educational discourse'. *Linguistics and Education* 14 (3/4), pp. 231-276.

Ellinas, A. A. (2015). 'Neo-Nazism in an established democracy: The persistence of Golden Dawn in Greece'. *South European Society and Politics* 20 (1), pp. 1-20.

Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and Power*. London: Longman.

Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Fairclough, N. (2000). 'Multiliteracies and language: Orders of discourse and intertextuality', in Cope, B. & Kalantzis, M. (eds.), *Multiliteracies: Literacy Learning and the Design of Social Futures*, London: Routledge, pp. 159-178.

Friedman, S. (2011). 'The cultural currency of a "good" sense of humour: British comedy and new forms of distinction'. *The British Journal of Sociology* 62 (2), pp. 347-370.

Friedman, S. (2013). 'The divisive power of humour: Comedy, taste and symbolic boundaries'. *Cultural Sociology* 7 (2), pp. 179-195.

Fterniati, A., Archakis, A., Tsakona, V. & Tsami, V. (2015). 'Scrutinising humorous mass culture texts in class: A critical language teaching proposal'. *Israeli Journal of Humour Research* 4 (1), pp. 28-52.

Gasparov, B. (2010). *Speech, Memory and Meaning: Intertextuality in Everyday Language*. Berlin: Mouton De Gruyter.

Gasteratou, S. (2016). 'Teaching about humour in L2: An alternative approach in the framework of critical literacy'. Athens: National and Kapodistrian University of Athens MA thesis. [in Greek]

Graff, H. J. (1989). 'Critical literacy versus cultural literacy - Reading signs of the times?'. *Interchange* 20 (1), pp. 46-52.

Hale, A. (2018). 'There *is* an after-life (for jokes, anyway): The potential for, and appeal of, "immortality" in humour'. *Humour: International Journal of Humour Research* 31 (3), pp. 507-538.

Hatzidaki, O. & Goutsos, D. (eds.) (2017). *Greece in Crisis: Combining Critical Discourse and Corpus Linguistics Perspectives*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Hempelmann, C. F. (2016). 'Humour in the teaching of writing: A microethnographic approach'. *EuroAmerican Journal of Applied Linguistics and Languages* 3 (2), pp. 42-55.

Hirsch, E. D. (1980). 'Culture and literacy'. *Journal of Basic Writing* 3 (1), pp. 27-47.

Hirsch, E. D. (1988). *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know*. New York: Vintage Books.

Hlynka, A. & Knupfer, N. N. (1997). 'A thinking person's comedy: A study of intertextuality in "Cheers"', in Griffin, R. E., Hunter, J. M., Schiffman, C. B. & Gibbs, W. J. (eds.), *VisionQuest: Journeys toward Visual Literacy. Selected Readings from the Annual Conference of the International Visual Literacy Association (28th, Cheyenne, Wyoming, October, 1996)*, pp. 401-410. Retrieved August 17, 2019 from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED408995.

Janks, H., Dixon, K., Ferreira, A., Granville, S. & Newfield, D. (2014). *Doing Critical Literacy: Texts and Activities for Students and Teachers*. New York: Routledge.

Johnson, M. J., Janisch, C. & Morgan-Fleming, B. (2001). 'Cultural literacy in classroom settings: Teachers and students adapt the core knowledge curriculum'. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 16 (3), pp. 259-272.

Kristeva, J. (1980). *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, trans. L. S. Roudiez. Oxford: Blackwell.

Kuipers, G. (2006). *Good Humour, Bad Taste: A Sociology of the Joke*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Markantonatou, M. (2013). 'Diagnosis, treatment, and effects of the crisis in Greece: A "special case" or a "test case"?'. *MPIfG Discussion Paper* 13/3. Retrieved June 15, 2017 from http://www.mpifg.de/pu/mpifg_dp/dp13-3.pdf.

Morreall, J. (2009). *Comic Relief: A Comprehensive Philosophy of Humour*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Norrick, N. R. (1989). 'Intertextuality in humour'. *Humour: International Journal of Humour Research* 2 (2), pp. 117-139.

Norrick, N. R. (1993). *Conversational Joking: Humour in Everyday Talk*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Park, J. H., Gabbadon, N. G. & Chernin, A. R. (2006). 'Naturalizing racial differences through comedy: Asian, Black, and White views on racial stereotypes in *Rush Hour 2*'. *Journal of Communication* 56 (1), 157-177.

Paul, R. (1990). 'Critical and cultural literacy: Where E. D. Hirsch goes wrong', in Paul, R., Willsen, J. & Binker, A. J. A. (eds.), *Critical Thinking: What Every Person Needs to Survive in a Rapidly Changing World*, Sonoma State University, Center for Critical Thinking and Moral Critique, pp. 527-533. Retrieved August 17, 2019 from http://www.criticalthinking.org/data/pages/19/47b8df537bbfee98e8590b44e6a3bc50513670ae53678.pdf.

Raskin, V. (1985). *Semantic Mechanisms of Humour*. Dordrecht: D. Reidel.

Raskin, V. (2008). 'On the political impotence of humour', in Lewis, P. (ed.), *The Muhammad Cartoons and Humour Research: A Collection of Essays*. *Humour: International Journal of Humour Research* 21 (1), pp. 26-30.

Rogers, R. & Mosley Wetzel, M. (2014). *Designing Critical Literacy: Education through Critical Discourse Analysis: Pedagogical and Research Tools for Teacher Researchers*. New York: Routledge.

Sacks, H. (1974). 'An analysis of the course of a joke's telling in conversation', in Bauman, R. & Sherzer, J. (eds.), *Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 337-353.

Santa Ana, O. (2009). 'Did you call in Mexican? The racial politics of Jay Leno immigrant jokes'. *Language in Society* 38 (1), pp. 23-45.

Sherzer, J. (1985). 'Puns and jokes', in van Dijk, T. A. (ed.), *Handbook of Discourse Analysis, Vol. 3, Discourse and Dialogue*, London: Academic Press, pp. 213-221.

St Clair, W. (2008 [1972]). *That Greece Might Still Be Free: The Philhellenes in the War of Independence*. Cambridge: OpenBook Publishers. Retrieved August 17, 2019 from https://www.openbookpublishers.com/reader/3#page/8/mode/2up.

Sue, C. A. & Golash-Boza, T. (2013). '"It was only a joke": How racial humour fuels colour–blind ideologies in Mexico and Peru'. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36 (10), pp. 1582-1598.

The Arabian Nights: Tales of 1,001 Nights, Vol. 1 (2010 [1706]), ed. R. Irwin, trans. M. C. Lyons & U. Lyons. London: Penguin.

Theocharis, Y. & van Deth, J. W. (2015). 'A modern tragedy? Institutional causes and democratic consequences of the Greek crisis'. *Representation* 51 (1), pp. 63-79.

Trousdale, R. (2018). 'Teaching comic narratives', in Jacobs, R. (ed.), *Teaching Narrative*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 71-85.

Tsakona, V. (2013). *The Sociolinguistics of Humour: Theory, Functions and Teaching*. Athens: Grigoris Publications. [in Greek]

Tsakona, V. (2015). '"The doctor said I suffer from vitamin € deficiency": Investigating the multiple social functions of Greek crisis jokes'. *Pragmatics* 25 (2), pp. 287-313.

Tsakona, V. (2017a). '"Democracy is 4 wolves and 1 sheep voting for food": Analysing jokes about politicians in the financial crisis', in Georgakopoulos, T., Pavlidou, T.-S., Pechlivanos, M., Alexiadou, A., Androutsopoulos, J., Kalokairinos, A., Skopeteas, S. & Stathi, K. (eds.), *Proceedings of the 12th International Conference on Greek Linguistics, Volume 2*, Berlin: Romiosini, pp. 1035-1049. Retrieved August 17, 2019 from http://www.cemog.fu-berlin.de/en/icgl12/offprints/tsakona/icgl12_Tsakona.pdf. [in Greek]

Tsakona, V. (2017b). '"This is not a political party, this is Facebook!": Political jokes and political (mis)trust in crisis-ridden Greece'. *European Journal of Humour Research* 5 (4), pp. 136-157.

Tsakona, V. (2018a). 'Intertextuality and cultural literacy in contemporary political jokes', in Sover, A. (ed.), *The Languages of Humour: Verbal, Visual, and Physical Humour*, London: Bloomsbury Academic, pp. 86-104.

Tsakona, V. (2018b). 'Intertextuality and/in political jokes'. *Lingua* 203, pp. 1-15.

Tsakona, V. (2019). 'Talking about humour, racism, and anti-racism in class: A critical literacy proposal'. *Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Braşov, Series IV: Philology and Cultural Studies* 12 (61) (2), pp. 111-141.

Tsakona, V. (2020a). *Recontextualising Humour: Rethinking the Analysis and Teaching of Humour*. Boston: De Gruyter Mouton.

Tsakona, V. (2020b, to appear). 'Tracing the trajectories of contemporary online joking'. *Medialinguistics/Медиалингвистика*.

Tsakona, V. (2020c). 'Victor Raskin's overlooked analysis of political jokes', in Attardo, S. (ed.), *Script-based Semantics: Foundations and Applications. Essays in Honour of Victor Raskin*, Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, pp. 139-165.

Vasquez, V. M. (2004). *Negotiating Critical Literacies with Young Children*. Mahwah: Laurence Erlbaum Associates.

Wallace, C. (2003). *Critical Reading in Language Education*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Werner, W. (2004). 'On political cartoons and social studies textbooks: Visual analogies, intertextuality, and cultural memory'. *Canadian Social Studies* 38 (2). Retrieved August 17, 2019 from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1073912.pdf.

Wodak, R. & Meyer, M. (eds.) (2001). *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Sage.

Ziesing, M. (2001). 'Cultural literacy and language fluency'. Retrieved August 17, 2019 from http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.558.8117&rep=rep1&type=pdf.